



THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.
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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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January 14, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas Garthwaite, M.D. 
Director and Chief Medical Officer

 Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. 
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING FROM IMPORTED CANDY**

On October 19, 2004, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Gloria Molina directing County Counsel to draft an ordinance banning the sale of candy containing toxic lead, and pending the ordinance, directing this Department to: 1) send a letter to grocers, 2) complete random testing of candy, 3) distribute educational posters, and 4) conduct outreach to schools. The following is a status of our efforts.

Direct County Counsel to draft an ordinance banning the sale of candy containing toxic lead.

County Counsel prepared a draft of the ordinance banning the sale of candy containing lead. Departmental staff provided comments and suggested revisions.

Pending the drafting of the ordinance, direct the Public Health Officer to send a letter to grocers Countywide requesting the voluntary removal of all candy containing lead.

A letter was prepared to all retail food establishment operators informing them of the lead safety campaign to enhance our efforts aimed at childhood lead poisoning prevention. Health Advisory Bulletins, which clearly indicate those candies that have been identified as containing high levels of lead, were developed for distribution to each of the retail facility operators for posting. These letters and Advisory Bulletins were mailed to 12,376 retail food markets throughout Los Angeles County on December 23, 2004. Additionally the letters and Advisory Bulletins were provided to each of our twenty-two District Environmental Services offices for distribution by field staff during routine inspections. If the identified candies are observed during the course of a routine inspection, the inspectors will document the brand, quantity, and site information on a newly developed survey sheet. Those facilities where the candies are found will be referred to the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP). Attached are copies of the letter, Health Advisory, and survey sheet.

Complete random testing of candies that are known by the FDA to exhibit exceptionally high levels of lead and publicize the results.

While the District Environmental Services' inspectors will be distributing the letters and Health Advisory Bulletins as well as documenting locations where they find the lead-tainted candies listed on the flyer, the CLPPP will be responsible for randomly picking up the samples for testing. These candies will be purchased from the food facility operator utilizing a pre-established petty cash fund. The candies will not be confiscated nor quarantined at this time, pending final approval of the ordinance banning their sale.

The County Environmental Toxicology laboratory will analyze the samples using EPA method **3050b**, the same method used by the State Health Department. The acceptable lead level established by the State and federal regulatory agencies is currently <5 ppm (parts per million is equivalent to milligrams of lead per kilogram of candy). Currently the standard recommendation established by the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is that children under the age of six consume < 6 micrograms of lead per day from all sources.

The tested candy results will be posted on the Environmental Health website. If the current regulatory level of lead in food products is reduced (as is currently under consideration), the new standard will be publicized on the internet. Tracking of these results will be maintained in a separate section of the laboratory database for easy reference.

Distribute educational posters to schools, childcare providers, emergency rooms, health centers, and WIC centers in high risk areas.

Full color posters or various signs were developed in English and in Spanish and posted in high risk areas of the County. During National Food Safety Month (September 2004) 264 posters were distributed to teachers within the Los Angeles Unified School District, and 6,031 flyers were handed out to students. Additionally, 100 posters and flyers were distributed to WIC Program agencies, 135 posters were distributed to the public health centers, 540 posters were provided to Public-Private Health Care facilities throughout Los Angeles County, 1,000 posters to the Head Start Programs, and nearly 2,000 posters were distributed to the Los Angeles County School Districts. An additional 988 posters in Spanish were provided by request on December 22, 2004, to various Los Angeles County agencies, i.e., WIC Program Agencies, LAC Public Health Centers, Head Start Programs, and various Public-Private Healthcare Facilities.

Conduct outreach to schools by providing information to parents and developing a curriculum on the health effects of lead in candy.

The CLPPP continues to strive to conduct comprehensive lead poisoning prevention outreach and education to high-risk populations throughout Los Angeles County. This program has incorporated the dangers associated with certain lead-tainted candies into a variety of their educational activities. These activities are as follows:

1. CLPPP launched its annual School Outreach Campaign in September 2004, which included:
 - a. An art contest for each of the thirteen grade levels, in which one winner will be selected per grade. The artwork will be sent to the State Department of Health Services for consideration for inclusion in the annual Lead Poisoning Prevention Calendar.
 - b. Distribution of forms for schools to order various lead awareness educational materials. As of November 2004, 37 schools have requested 297 posters.
 - c. Plans for CLPPP staff to deliver a lead poisoning prevention message at schools and/or Parent/Teacher Association meetings.
2. Currently, CLPPP is working in collaboration with the State Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch in developing a new school curriculum that will include lead in candy as well as other non-traditional sources of lead exposure.
3. In October, CLPPP conducted five training sessions to childcare providers. Sixty-two participants were trained on the problems associated with lead poisoning including source of exposure, how to inspect for and reduce possible hazards of lead, how to share this information with parents and families, and the importance of testing children.
4. CLPPP is currently collaborating with the Child Care Licensing Agency and First 5 LA to schedule more training on lead poisoning prevention to providers and proposing a regular cycle of trainings from which providers can choose.
5. CLPPP has conducted and scheduled lead awareness and update trainings to nine WIC providers. A total of 340 staff members are expected to be trained.
6. CLPPP staff developed a Lead-In-Candy warning article that was published in the "Public's Health" October issue to coincide with Halloween. In addition, press releases were developed to announce National Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 24-30, 2004, that included the Lead-In-Candy warning.
7. The lead-tainted candy educational posters are being utilized as teaching aids by CLPPP Public Health Nurses during home visits with clients.

We will provide you with another status report in 30 days. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please let us know.

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Attachments

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES ♦ DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

November 29, 2004

TO: All Chiefs, Seniors, and Retail Food Inspection Staff

FROM: Arturo Aguirre

SUBJECT: REVISED LEAD ADVISORY / FLYER

This is to advise all retail food inspection staff to distribute the attached lead flyer/ advisory to retailers and consumers in order to warn them about the dangers of lead tainted candy. High levels of lead may cause long term health problems as well as learning and behavioral disorders in children. Between 1993 and 2004 the California Department of Health Services has issued eight health advisories warning consumers of high levels of lead in the following listed candies:

Picarindo (Tamarind candy)	Bolirindo - Dulmex brand
Vero Rebanaditas	Dulce de Tamarindo- Margarita brand
Vero Mango	Licona Tamarind
Vero Elotes	Jarrita Chonita -Tejocote
Chaca Chaca (Chili and apple pulp candy)	Storck Eucalyptus (candy from the Philippines)
Brinquitos (Chili candy)	Lucas Acidito - Lucas Limon - Super Lucas
Tama Roca	Serpentinas
Pelon Pelo Rico	Tablarindo

Attached, is a copy of the flyer, advisory, and a CD ROM (containing PDF files of both flyer and advisory) for duplication and distribution. Inspection staff shall provide a copy of the flyer and advisory during the course of their routine inspections. Please ensure that the flyer and advisory are reproduced in two-sided format (one side English, opposite side Spanish).

If the above identified candies are observed during routine inspections, document the brand, quantity, and site information on the attached log. Please note that (1) the candies are not to be ordered removed from sale, and (2) a referral to the California Food and Drug Branch is not required at this time.

Should you require further assistance or need clarification regarding this matter, please contact Consultation & Technical Services at (626) 430-5320.

AA:gg:kl

Attachments

c: M. Carter
J. Nash
A. Medina
R. Wagener



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Public Health

THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

JONATHAN E. FIELDING, M.D., M.P.H.
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

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5050 Commerce Drive
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November 30, 2004

Dear Retail Food Establishment Operator:

Environmental Health Services of the County of Los Angeles, Department of Health Services is launching a lead safety campaign to augment our existing efforts aimed at preventing childhood lead poisoning. The campaign strives to inform consumers and retail food establishment operators about the effects and dangers of lead poisoning in young children.

In the United States, nearly 900,000 children between the ages of 1 and 5 have a blood lead level above the level of concern. Children with lead poisoning are usually asymptomatic; symptoms that do occur are often subtle and mimic other childhood illnesses. Mild lead poisoning can be associated with hyperactivity, irritability, sleeplessness, lack of concentration, behavioral problems, and learning disabilities. More severe lead poisoning may be accompanied by hearing problems, headaches, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, constipation, muscle soreness, anemia, and neurological impairments such as stumbling, loss of concentration, seizures, encephalopathy, and coma.

Persistent neurological impairment can follow even mild episodes of lead poisoning, and the neurological and developmental consequences of lead poisoning may not be apparent for many years. Therefore, halting continued exposure to lead is the best remedy for most children with elevated blood lead levels.

Prevention of lead hazards is an essential public health goal. As such, our Department continues to identify sources of exposure that may pose a threat to children. Currently, a major concern is exposure through the consumption of candies that contain harmful levels of lead in the candy, the candy wrappers, and/or the clay pots designed to hold the candy.

In light of the potential for lead exposure from suspected candies, we are requesting your cooperation and assistance by voluntarily discontinuing the sale of candies containing lead and the posting lead warning flyers in public areas within your facility that are most visited by

November 30, 2004

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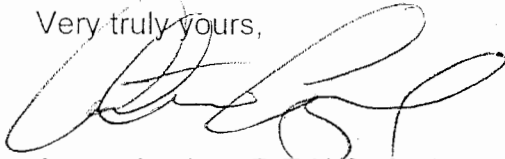
children and parents. The flyers, provided in English and Spanish, are designed to provide the public with information about contaminated candies, lead hazards, lead testing methods, and contact telephone numbers for additional information.

It is our belief that the posting of warning flyers and the removal for sale of candies that contain lead, will help to improve the lives of your patrons by empowering their ability to make informed food choices, as well as provide businesses an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to the health of the community.

If you have any questions pertaining to Environmental Health's lead safety campaign, please contact Joe Nash, Director of District Environmental Services at (626) 430-5200.

Thank you for your support of public health.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arturo Aguirre', written over the words 'Very truly yours,'.

Arturo Aguirre, R.E.H.S., M.A.
Director of Environmental Health

AA:tp



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES ♦ DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
PUBLIC HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, CA 91706. Telephone (626) 430-5320



HEALTH ADVISORY

Lead Tainted Candy

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services is warning consumers about the following products, because the candies, clay pots, or wrappers may contain lead. Between 1993 and 2004 the California Department of Health Services has issued eight public health advisories warning consumers of high levels of lead in the following listed candies:

Picarindo (Tamarind candy)	Bolirindo - Dulmex brand
Vero Rebanaditas	Dulce de Tamarindo- Margarita brand
Vero Mango	Licona Tamarind
Vero Elotes	Jarrita Chonita -Tejocote
Chaca Chaca (Chili and apple pulp candy)	Storck Eucalyptus (candy from the Philippines)
Brinquitos (Chili candy)	Lucas Acidito - Lucas Limon - Super Lucas
Tama Roca	Serpentinas
Pelon Pelo Rico	Tablarindo

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that children under age 7 should not consume more than 6.0 micrograms of lead from all food sources daily. Consumption of excessively high levels of lead is toxic to humans, especially infants, children, and pregnant women. Lead can also permanently damage the central nervous system, resulting in learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, and other long-term health problems. Testing by the FDA has shown that these candies, candy-wrappers, and clay pots used to package may contain high levels of dangerous lead.

For more information about these candies, please call Los Angeles County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 1-800-LA-4-LEAD. You can also contact the Environmental Health Division by calling the 24 hour hotline at 1(888) 700-9995 or email at eh@ladhs.org. Consumer complaints can also be reported at our website at www.lapublichealth.org/eh.



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES ♦ DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
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5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, CA 91706. Telephone (626) 430-5320



AVISO DE SALUD

Dulces Con Niveles Altos De Plomo

El Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Condado de Los Angeles está advirtiéndolo a los consumidores sobre los siguientes dulces, porque los dulces, las ollas de barro, o las envolturas pueden contener plomo. Entre los años de 1993 y 2004, el Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Estado de California ha publicado ocho boletines advirtiéndolo a los consumidores sobre los niveles altos de plomo en los dulces mencionados abajo:

Picarindo (Tamarind candy)	Bolirindo - Dulmex brand
Vero Rebanaditas	Dulce de Tamarindo- Margarita brand
Vero Mango	Licona Tamarind
Vero Elotes	Jarrita Chonita -Tejocote
Chaca Chaca (Chili and apple pulp candy)	Storck Eucalyptus (candy from the Philippines)
Brinquitos (Chili candy)	Lucas Acidito - Lucas Limon - Super Lucas
Tama Roca	Serpentinas
Pelon Pelo Rico	Tablarindo

La Administración de Fármacos y Alimentos (FDA) de los Estados Unidos, recomienda que los niños menores de 7 años de edad no deben consumir más de 6.0 microgramos de plomo de todas las fuentes alimenticias que se consumen a diario. El consumo excesivo de niveles altos de plomo es tóxico para los seres humanos, especialmente en los infantes, niños, y mujeres embarazadas. El plomo puede dañar el sistema nervioso central permanentemente y como resultado causar problemas de aprendizaje, problemas de comportamiento, y otros problemas de salud a largo plazo. Los resultados de análisis del FDA han demostrado que estos dulces, las envolturas, y ollas de barro que se usan para empaquetarlos pueden contener niveles altos de plomo, los cuales son peligrosos.

Para más información sobre estos dulces, favor de llamar al teléfono 1-800-LA-4-LEAD del Programa Contra el Envenenamiento de Plomo Infantil del Condado de Los Angeles. También, puede llamar a la División del Departamento de Salud Ambiental del Condado de Los Angeles a la línea telefónica 1(888)700-9995 que está disponible las 24 horas al día, o por correo electrónico: eh@ladhs.org. Las quejas de los consumidores también pueden ser reportadas en nuestra página del internet: www.lapublichealth.org/eh.

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ADVISO DE SALUD ¡ADVERTENCIA!

LOS DULCES PUEDEN CONTENER PLOMO

Los siguientes dulces, jarros, y envolturas pueden contener plomo y causar problemas de salud de largo plazo así como problemas de aprendizaje, falta de atención ó de conducta en los niños.



Para más información sobre estos productos, por favor comuníquese con Salud Ambiental del Condado de Los Angeles por medio de nuestro sitio en la red, correspondencia electrónica, ó línea telefónica de emergencia:

VISÍTENOS EN LA RED



DEPARTAMENTO DE SERVICIOS DE SALUD PÚBLICA
DEL CONDADO DE LOS ANGELES

Salud Pública

www.lapublichealth.org/eh
Dirección Electrónica: eh@ladhs.org
Línea Para Quejas de 24 Horas :
(888) 700-9995

INFORMACIÓN ADICIONAL SOBRE EL PLOMO Y FUENTES DE REPORTE:

Programa de Prevención Infantil Contra el Envenenamiento por Plomo del Condado de Los Angeles
1-800-LA-4-LEAD

Departamento de Servicios de Salud de California Rama de Prevención Infantil
Contra el Envenenamiento por Plomo
1-510-622-5000

Departamento de Servicios de Salud de California
1-800-495-3232

Línea Telefónica del Departamento de Servicios de Salud, Alimentos, y Fármacos de California. Para reportar alimentos con plomo que se venden en Los Estados Unidos lláme al
1-916-322-6323

Centro de Información Nacional de Plomo
www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/about/about.htm
1-800-424 - 5323

HEALTH ADVISORY WARNING!

CANDIES MAY CONTAIN LEAD

The following candies, clay pots, and/or wrappers may contain high levels of lead, which may cause serious long term health problems as well as learning and behavioral disorders in children.



For more information about these products, please contact Los Angeles County Environmental Health at our website, e-mail address, or 24 hour complaint hotline listed below:

Visit Our Web Site



www.lapublichealth.org/eh
e-mail address: eh@ladhs.org
24 Hour Complaint Hot Line :
(888) 700-9995

ADDITIONAL LEAD INFORMATION AND REPORTING SOURCES:

Los Angeles County Childhood Lead
Poisoning Prevention Program
1-800-LA-4-LEAD

California Department of Health Services
Childhood Lead Poisoning
Prevention Branch
1-510-622-5000

California Department of Health Services
1-916-445-4171

California Department of Health Services
Food and Drug Hotline. To report foods with
lead sold in the United States
1-800-495-3232

National Lead Information Center
www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/about/about.htm
1-800-424-5323